



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Contact: Vicky Krikelas
(206) 860-3263

NOAA07-XXX
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 1, 2007

PUGET SOUND BENEFITS FROM FEDERAL COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT

NOAA's Northwest Fisheries Science Center Formalizes Agreement with Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory

Over 12 representatives from NOAA Fisheries' Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) and U.S. Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) formalized a collaborative research agreement today during a signing ceremony in Seattle, WA.

Scientists, staff and dignitaries commended the agreement as a vehicle that brings together two leading research institutions in an effort to better understand and protect the Puget Sound ecosystem and other marine resources in the Pacific Northwest. Some of the most challenging environmental issues in the region include water quality in the Puget Sound basin, changing ocean conditions and climate, recovering species at risk, and food security of our nation's seafood.

"Big challenges require big science," said Dr. Usha Varanasi, NWFSC's Science and Research Director.

"Our complimentary science capabilities in biotechnology and environmental assessment will help provide the science to better inform the decisions that will be made to restore Puget Sound," Varanasi said.

Both NWFSC and PNNL have a long history of collaboration in the ocean and coastal sciences and ongoing interests in investigating natural disturbances and man-made threats to the marine environment.

"Both organizations have a deep interest in ecosystem-level processes including habitat restoration, molecular bioscience, and ecotoxicology. This agreement marks the start of opportunities for our two labs to elevate the level of scientific discourse in the region," said Dr. Rod Quinn, PNNL's Associate Laboratory Director of Environmental Technology.

The joint agreement brings together some of the nation's top scientists and will allow both laboratories to share state-of-the-art tools in fully-equipped facilities located at NWFSC's Montlake Laboratory in Seattle, WA, NWFSC's Manchester Research Station in Manchester, WA, PNNL's Marine Research Operations in Sequim, WA and PNNL's main laboratory in Richland, WA.

PNNL, operated by Batelle for the U.S. Department of Energy, conducts groundbreaking research on coastal and oceanic processes, including coastal assessment, coastal security, and biotechnology. PNNL uses highly sophisticated approaches in its marine programs, ranging from environmental chemistry and molecular biosciences to ecosystem processes.

The NWFSC conducts research to help conserve and manage living marine resources and their habitats in the Northeast Pacific Ocean. The center is particularly active in the Puget Sound region and its West coast Center for Oceans and Human Health is currently focused on using an ecosystem approach and biotechnology to investigate threats to seafood safety under changing ocean conditions and human/land use activities.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

###

On the Web:

Northwest Fisheries Science Center: www.nwfsc.noaa.gov

NOAA: www.noaa.gov

PNNL: www.pnl.gov